M 439 centralized structure of the Mossi empire ensured the necessary safety for exchanges and trade. Nowadays they still have a very small part in it, and only when forced and pressed by the need to pay taxes.

M 439 To corroborate this Mossi incapacity for trade, I need only select from my field notes of December, 1908. Here is a significant one concerning a Mossi village in the northern part of the /Ouagadougou/ circle, "No trade in this village. It is the Yarsé from Téma who come and buy the cotton bands dyed blue and sell them at Salaga (Gold Coast). Our Mossi would profit by doing this themselves. They agree but nevertheless fail to do it, saying that their forebears did not do it either. They do no trading, therefore." In another village, Yakki, where industries flourish, I made the following note, "Trade, on the other hand, is nil, as among all Mossi."

M H 441 439 I stated above that higher trade among the Mossi was confined to a few Haoussa colonies. Concerning this, and in order to give an idea of this trading, I shall record here a short profile of a Haoussa trader from Ouagadougou, Maïguisiri Dangaori, who has been there for fifteen years although his family lives at Iko in Haoussa territory.

He has no fields, of course. He does nothing but trade.

He buys cattle and sheep locally. He takes them to Kumasi on the Gold Coast (this is not usually done by the Yarsé, who do not go so far south). He sells them there, and with the returns he buys kola nuts, European fabrics, glass trinkets, sugar, cast-iron pots, etc. On the way back, he hires needy Haoussa who live on the Gold Coast as bearers and takes them to Ouagadougou. Each bearer is paid 35 francs on arrival for the fifty days of travel. In addition, he feeds them along the way. Their food costs him 300 cowries a day.

H [482 465] He sells the goods he brought back, or rather has them sold at the Ouagadougou market, for he has an employee who /540/ sells for him at market. This employee is not a member of his family. He is a Haoussa, to whom he gives 5 percent of the sales. That is all. Beyond this he gives him nothing, not even food.

Our trader usually waits until everything is sold before returning to the Gold Coast. If the merchandise does not sell quickly enough, he picks up what is left and disposes of it on the way back.